

Community Planning and Economic Development News Release

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City of Minneapolis STEP-UP Youth Employment Program Announces 2016 Employer, Intern and Supervisor of the Year Awards at Year-end Celebration

Thursday, August 18, 2016 (Minneapolis, MN) – Earlier this afternoon, the City of Minneapolis STEP-UP youth employment program announced the recipients of the 2016 STEP-UP Employers of the Year, STEP-UP Interns of the Year, and STEP-UP Supervisors of the Year awards. The award winners were announced during a celebration of STEP-UP's 13th annual cohort of interns, a group of nearly 1,700 youth ages 14 to 21 who worked at over 230 top Twin Cities nonprofits, government agencies, small businesses, and corporations this summer. Over 800 STEP-UP employers, interns and community supporters attended the event, which was held at the Guthrie Theatre.

The awards were presented by Minneapolis Mayor Betsy Hodges and STEP-UP Co-Chairs R.T. Rybak, CEO and President of The Minneapolis Foundation, and Richard Davis, Chairman and CEO of U.S. Bank.

"I am so proud of this summer's STEP-UP interns for completing remarkable work here at the City, in businesses across Minneapolis, and in their communities. The number one indicator of future workforce success is early exposure to work experience," said Minneapolis Mayor Betsy Hodges. "This is why I am committed to continued investment in programs like STEP-UP that provide our driven young people with opportunities that set them up for future professional success."

2016 Award Winners include:

STEP-UP Employer of the Year

- Cookie Cart

- U.S. Bank

STEP-UP Discover Intern of the Year

- Mahamed Abdulahi, City of Lakes Community Land Trust
- Stephania Coria, CLUES

STEP-UP Achieve Intern of the Year

- Simon Rendon, University of Minnesota
- Ashley Yang, City of Minneapolis

STEP-UP Discover Supervisor of the Year

- Anthony Emmanuel, Hope Community
- Meghann Gordon, Commonbond Communities.

STEP-UP Achieve Supervisor of the Year

- Allison Berg, Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota
- Christine Kim, Briggs and Morgan

"On behalf of the 200 young people who have gained employment, leadership and life skills through their participation in a STEP-UP internship at Cookie Cart over the years, we are thrilled to be named the Discover Employer of the Year," said Sara Ernst, Cookie Cart Associate Director. "The STEP-UP program has been a fundamental cornerstone in giving teens in our neighborhoods the chance to maximize their talents and build a successful career pathway. We are proud to be part of a community that cares and values young people."

"U.S. Bank has partnered with STEP-UP since its inception in 2004. We are proud of this partnership and honored to be named Employer of the Year," said Jennie Carlson, Executive Vice President of Human Resources for U.S. Bancorp. "Through STEP-UP, we give students the support and experiences they need to create viable paths to their future dreams. Students are not the only beneficiaries of Step-Up. U.S. Bank benefits as well. The perspective and interest the interns bring is inspiring. Our interns have held positions in nearly every area of the company, including Community Banking and Branch Delivery, Technology, Wealth Management and Human Resources. These students are our future workforce. Investing in them helps develop a new generation of dynamic leaders and vibrant communities."

IntermediaArts and the Patrick Henry High School Step Team performed at the event, and reflections from STEP-UP interns Aajaze Davis, Vernon Gates, and Brianna Skildum were also woven into the celebration.

The City of Minneapolis STEP-UP program is a partnership with AchieveMpls. Other major partners include Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, and Project for Pride in Living. As one of the country's premiere youth employment programs, STEP-UP serves Minneapolis youth and young adults age 14-21

who face some of the greatest barriers to employment, including youth from low-income families, youth of color, and youth with disabilities.

Since the program was launched in 2004, it has provided over 23,000 internship opportunities. STEP-UP interns explore diverse career interests, gain valuable on-the-job skills, make strong professional connections, and prepare for meaningful careers. Most interns receive 7-14 hours of work-readiness training certified by the Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce. STEP-UP also offers advanced internships and industry-specific trainings and certifications in partnership with local industry leaders. In 2016, 89% of STEP-UP youth were youth of color and 36% were youth from immigrant families. Learn more about STEP-UP at the [City of Minneapolis website](#). Follow STEP-UP on social media with hashtag #STEPUPMPLS.

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